Communication and Community: Cornerstones of Bi-Cultural CPE Supervision

TCI- Theme Centered Interaction – Ruth Cohn

The Four Ear Communication Model – Friedemann Schulz von Thun

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The Communication Model by Friedemann Schulz von Thun

The 4 Levels of Communicating with One Another

**BLUE:** Sender: Factual information (which I am informing you about)
Recipient of information: listen with the factual ear

**GREEN:** Sender: A self statement (what I show of myself)
Recipient: I am hearing something about you as a person

**YELLOW:** Sender: Relationship indicator (what I think of you; how I relate to you)
Recipient: I am hearing something about our relationship

**RED:** Sender: An appeal (what I want you to do)
Recipient: I am hearing that I am supposed to do something
Communication is the exchange of verbal messages informed by facial expressions, intonation, use of language. One statement, it has four different levels: factual – self-revelation – relationship – appeal.

- Factual: focus on dates, facts, factual content. The receiver listens with her factual ear according to truth criteria of correct/incorrect, relevant/not relevant, sufficiency.

- Self statement: any statement contains information about the person, an indication of what’s going on inside, feelings, values, personality traits. The receiver listens with the self-statement ear: what does this tell me about the other at this moment?
Cont.: Relationship Side and Appeal Side of a Message

- **Relationship Indicator**: sender lets the other person know about the status of the relationship. The receiver listens with the relational ear: focusing on interpersonal dynamics such as role differential, trust, ambiguity and criticism.

- **Appeal**: sender expresses either unconsciously or consciously a desire, a wish for an impact/influence on the other person and his behavior. The receiver listens with an ear that focuses on: what do I have to do, what does she want me to do next?

- **Meta- Communication** addresses the underlying messages of the exchange. When sender and receiver talk about their communication, clarifying intentions, desires, wishes and implications. Reflection process, feedback, relationship clarification = CPE Supervision.
Introduction to Theme Centered Interaction

Theme Centered Interaction (TCI) is a Concept for Personal Development and working with groups. TCI focuses on the following:

- active, creative and discovering process of Learning and Working.
- process and structure
- making visible the invisible components of group dynamics
- tools and attitudes to optimize interactions in group processes
- applicable to a broad range of group purposes – CPE IPR, Work teams, department teams
- holistic view of personhood
- integrating feelings, thoughts, perceptions and instincts (head, heart, gut)
The triangle surrounded by the circle is the symbol for TCI: components of the group work that need to be kept in a dynamic balance for a group to achieve its goals, namely:

- the individual ego (I);
- the need of the group (we);
- the theme (it);
- the environment/context (globe).
Where does it come from?

Ruth Cohn, a Swiss psycho-analyst, is the originator of TCI in the 60's:

- Her intention was to contribute to society by stimulating personal growth and learning in the midst of life.
- To make the insights from Human psychology and psychoanalysis available to a wider range of people.
- TCI is based on the fundamental belief that human autonomy increases with active awareness of social and universal interdependence.
- Key values: to respect Life and its evolvement; bio-psycho-spiritual dimension of persons.
- The free will occurs within internal and outer boundaries - a expansion of these boundaries is possible.
- TCI is a systematic approach to realize such expansion through the psycho-dynamic and group-pedagogical processes.
Two TCI postulates are widely spread by now:

1. 'Be your own chairperson'
   - each person is responsible for her/his own thoughts, feelings and needs
   - each person takes her/himself, the others and the theme seriously
   - commitment and responsibility for being part of the process undergone
   - Respect for others in their thoughts, feelings and needs.

2. 'Disturbances have precedence’
   - When disturbance are not addressed, they occupy energy and prevent people from being in the here and now, hidden agendas
   - to give a space to these disturbances, where possible remedy them, otherwise agree to consciously park them.
Important polarities at the heart of TCI and human interactions

Balance of structure, process and trust:

Structure:
- too much structure prevents the process to unfold
- too little prevent the process from being conclusive
- structure encourages to concentrate on what matters rather than being caught in details

Process:
- Role of group facilitator to plan and structure group session: focus and openness
- Routine and free-floating moments: fluidity between those phases based on mastery of the facilitator and the chairpersonship of each participant

Trust:
- as the outcome of the balance between structure and process
- Structure generates trust if it fosters the flow of the process
- If structure and process are kept in balance then trust can manifest itself
- Lack of trust often means: equilibrium between structure and process is broken. (i.e. structure has taken over, prevents the theme or the participants to express their needs of the present moment)
- I.E.: process has taken over, leads nowhere tangible for the participants = discomfort is growing (high anxiety).
- I.E.: facilitator interrupts a process in the middle of the flow may create mistrust.
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